



THE NEW DEATH

by Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

CHEESE	The embodiment of Cheese, currently interviewing for Death's job.
EDGAR	A poor fellow who had the recent misfortune of dying.
BRUUNHILDE	The angel who is evaluating Cheese for the job.

Note: Cheese can be of either gender. With a change in name and pronouns, so can Edgar. Bruunhilde should be female.

SETTING

Edgar's bedroom. Any time.

SCENE

(EDGAR is sleeping in his bed. CHEESE, with a long staff, is waiting for him to “wake up”, but he doesn’t. After a while, Cheese gets impatient, and starts making little sounds, which become louder sounds, and eventually he kicks the bed a bit. Then more. Finally, he uses the staff to push Edgar out of bed, startling him “awake”. Initially facing away from Cheese. Edgar can’t figure out what is going on, then turns to see Cheese, which startles him even more. In the background is BRUUNHILDE, who remains silent, observing and taking notes.)

EDGAR

Wha-- Who the hell are you? *(Cheese says nothing.)* Who are you!?! What are you doing here?!

CHEESE

(Ritualistically...)

It is *time*, Edgar Hodgekiss.

EDGAR

What? What are you doing in my house? How did you get in here?

CHEESE

(Same tone)

It... is... time.

EDGAR

Time? Time for what? Time to call the police? Time to buy a gun? Who are you!?!

CHEESE

It is *your* time. Time to pass to the next world.

EDGAR

Are you threatening me? What the hell is going on!?

CHEESE

You have died, Edgar Hodgekiss, and I am here to escort you to the Underworld!

EDGAR

What!?!?

CHEESE

(Dropping the ritualistic posturing...)

Died. Dead. Gone. You've kicked it. Time to move on.

EDGAR

Move on...

CHEESE

Shuffle off this mortal coil and all that. Come on. Get up. Let's go.

EDGAR

You're kidding me.

CHEESE

'Fraid not. Come on, let's move. We haven't got all day.

EDGAR

I'm... dead?

CHEESE

Like a doorknob. Let's go.

EDGAR

I'm not dead. *(Cheese just looks at him.)* I'm not! I didn't die!

CHEESE

Yes, you did. Just a few moments ago. Heart stopped. It's a bummer, but what are you going to do? Let's go.

EDGAR

And you...

CHEESE

Yep. Here to escort you to the Underworld. Let's go.

EDGAR

You... you're... Death?

CHEESE

Uhh... sure. Let's go now.

EDGAR

Sure? Sure?! Are you or aren't you Death?!

CHEESE

For all practical purposes, yes. I'm Death. Let's go.

EDGAR

For all practical... You're not Death. Who are you?

CHEESE

I'm filling in. Death is... uh... unavailable.

EDGAR

Unavailable? What the hell is that suppose to... How can Death be unavailable?

CHEESE

I'm not at liberty at say.

EDGAR

If you're not Death, then who the hell are you?

CHEESE

(Dramatically...)

I... Am... *Cheese!*

EDGAR

What?

CHEESE

(Same dramatic delivery...)

I... Am... *Cheese!*

EDGAR

You're... cheese.

CHEESE

Not *(imitating/mocking the way Edgar said it)* cheese. *Cheese!*

EDGAR

What?

CHEESE

Are you not familiar with Cheese?